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Rogers Reports:

No Cookie Pusher He!

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By WARREN ROGERS

WASHINGTON: Whenever anybody starts ragging the State Department about being a nest of striped-pants cookie pushers, I like to tell them about Roger Hilsman, the new Assistant Secretary of State for Far East Affairs.

Hilsman, 43, has just taken over from Averell Harriman as the key man in the State Department for the Far East, and he has just made his first trip in that capacity to the area. But it is by no means Hilsman's first venture into the troubled Pacific.

Not much has been heard of him because he has for so long been a behind-the-scenes operator. For the past two years, he has been the State Department's Director of Intelligence, and before that he was for five years a top executive in the Library of Congress' Legislative Reference Service. Before that, he taught and did research at Princeton and Johns Hopkins Universities.

But it is in World War II that you really come to grips with the man. To begin with, he was an Army brat, born at Waco, Texas, and bouncing around from camp to camp with his parents, Col. and Mrs. Roger Hilsman. Naturally, he went to West Point, graduating in 1943.

Hilsman's father was captured early in the war by the Japanese in the Philippines. The best information available was that he had been taken to a prison in Manchuria. With this in mind, young Hilsman volunteered for a "dangerous mission in the Far East."

The mission was with Merrill's Marauders in Burma. While battling for a Japanese-held airfield, Hilsman was



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caught in the crossfire of two Japanese machine guns. Three bullets struck him in the lower abdomen, a fourth creased his chest. At the hospital, where he spent three months recuperating, they found 16 bullet holes in his clothing.

Later, he and four other Americans led about 300 Burmese fighting behind enemy lines on a mission for the OSS. They blew up bridges, ambushed Japanese patrols, conducted intelligence work, and, all in all, killed 300 of the enemy while suffering only 12 casualties.

Volunteering again, Hilsman joined a parachute team whose mission was to free captured American officers in the Mukden area. He hoped to rescue his father. In an operation confused by the end of the war and the arrival of Russian aircraft at Mukden, he managed to be the first man to reach the prison camp. He gets a little misty-eyed when he tells what happened next:

"I was the first American to get to the gate—the first American that my father saw."

He had corresponded, throughout the war with Eleanor Hoyt of Baltimore, and in 1946 they were married. In 1947, Hilsman left OSS and went to Yale where, in 1950, he got his Ph.D. He worked in London and Frankfurt for NATO during 1950-53, switching to the academic life at Princeton and Johns Hopkins until he came to the Library of Congress in 1956.

He has written or collaborated on a number of penetrating books on intelligence, military policy, the Western alliance, and the Cold War. He puts in a 12-hour day six days a week, starting off with a 6:30 a.m. reveille and a two or three mile walk before breakfast.

So don't talk to me about striped-pants cookie pushers!